



FSU-WESTERN: In Russia, an early-week heat wave (maximum temperatures ranging from 35 to 40 degrees C) gripped major corn and sunflower-producing areas in the North Caucasus and lower Volga Valley, increasing stress on crops in the reproductive to filling stages of development. However, during the latter half of the week, cooler weather and light to moderate showers (9-59 mm) brought some relief to crops in these areas, stabilizing crop conditions. Farther north, intermittent showers (10-50 mm or more) maintained wet soils from the Northwest Region eastward across the Volga Vyatsk, further slowing winter grain harvesting. Reports as of July 31 from Russia indicated that small grains and pulses, excluding corn, were about 15 percent harvested. In Ukraine, drier weather in northern, central, and western areas improved conditions for winter wheat harvesting, delayed by previous wetness. Reports as of July 31 indicated that small grains and pulses, excluding corn, were about 52 percent harvested in Ukraine, with the grain harvest running about 2 weeks behind schedule due to previous wetness. Unfavorably hot, dry weather continued in southeastern Ukraine, causing further declines in the condition of corn and sunflowers. In Belarus and the Baltics, wet weather (17-53 mm) continued to hamper winter grain harvesting, but maintained abundant soil moisture for summer crop development. Weekly temperatures averaged 1 to 3 degrees C above normal in Russia and eastern Ukraine, and near to slightly below normal in the Baltics, Belarus, and western Ukraine.